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OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #0242/01 0200533
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4838
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 5967
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 9519
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI IMMEDIATE 0052
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 2272
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0255
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 2462
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3036
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 3399
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 000242

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/20/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECIN](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#) [KN](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE LEADERSHIP OF ASEAN-RELATED SUMMITS

REF: MANILA 0179

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Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo on January 17 briefed Ambassador on the outcomes of the ASEAN-related summits hosted by the Philippines in Cebu January 10-15 (reftel). He highlighted that he and President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had gone "full blast" on both Burma and North Korea, with "no mincing of words," including in the chairman's statements from the ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN 3 Summit, and the East Asia Summit. He admitted that Burma's General Soe Win was "not forthcoming." He described how the Indonesians had cited Aceh in informal discussions with the Burmese as an example of how other countries could help to resolve lingering internal problems, with other ASEAN members also emphasizing the need for Burma to "let others in." He added that he had also used the example of Mindanao and the helpful role the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team and other partners were playing with this long-standing insurgency. He admitted that the Burmese reaction was "not much," but confirmed that, during a bilateral meeting with President Arroyo, Soe Win had invited her to make a visit. He did not indicate that such a visit was likely or imminent.

¶2. (C) Separately, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Policy Erlinda Basilio on January 19 described the summits to Pol/C as an "unqualified success." She noted that, while ASEAN stuck to its basic principle of "non-interference," ASEAN members had arrived at a point where they could "speak candidly and frankly" with each other about internal problems, notably Burma. She said that ASEAN had agreed that its summit remained the appropriate forum for the discussion of Burma and calls for greater progress on the roadmap to democracy and release of political prisoners, while letting the East Asia Summit concentrate on other strategic issues, notably North Korea. She added that the accession of Timor Leste and France to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation during the Cebu Summits did not indicate that these countries would be joining the EAS, noting that this was only one of several usual pre-conditions for participation.

¶3. (C) U/S Basilio also expressed confidence that at least six ASEAN members would ratify the new ASEAN Convention on Counterterrorism, necessary to bring it into effect, while

commenting that this could take some time in light of the differing parliamentary procedures for ratification in member states. She also indicated that the new High Level Panel drafting the ASEAN Charter based on the input provided by the Eminent Persons Group would complete its work in time for the November 2007 13th ASEAN Summit in Singapore. She noted that former Philippine U/S Rosario Manolo would chair this panel until August 2007, when she would turn the task over to the distinguished retired Singaporean diplomat Tommy Koh.

¶4. (C) Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Migrant Worker Affairs Esteban B. Cornejos, Jr. separately admitted that the adoption of a new ASEAN Declaration on the Prevention and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers had been a special priority of the Philippine government, given the large number of Overseas Filipino Workers in the region. He underscored that it very clearly reflected the theme during the Cebu Summits of "One Caring and Sharing Community." On the subject of mutual recognition of nurses' credentials, another key concern of the Philippine government, he clarified that this intra-ASEAN agreement had come into effect in 2006 and that the leaders had merely taken note of it.

¶5. (C) Comment: Philippine leadership helped turned the annual ASEAN summit and the still-new East Asia Summit into more substantive meetings than have often been the case in the past, particularly on two top concerns of the USG in East Asia -- Burma and North Korea. We will continue to work closely with our Philippine counterparts to ensure that the preparatory meetings for the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference and ASEAN Regional Forum in July 2007 are equally substantive and reflect these important concerns.

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KENNEY